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Message Text

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62
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /065 W
---------- 111448
P R 301944Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5964
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, BE, UR
SUBJECT: BELGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER SPEAKS OUT ON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DETENTE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY. IN AN INFORMAL ADDRESS ON JANUARY 28 TO HIS SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY'S ORGANIZATION OF SELF-EMPLOYED SMALL BUSINESSMEN (CEPIC), VANDEN BOEYNANTS SET FORTH HIS VIEWS ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE NEEDS, THE US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA AND DETENTE. END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING WITHOUT PREPARED TEXT TO GROUP REPRESENTING RIGHT
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WING OF MAJOR GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTY, VANDEN BOEYNANTS MADE

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FOLLOWING REMARKS (EMBASSY SUMMARY TRANSLATION):

"NEVER HAS DETENTE BEEN AS STRAINED AS IT IS TODAY. SOVIET AGRESSIVENESS AND EXPANSIONISM,THE ECONOMIC CRISIS, THE TWITCHING OF THE WEST BROUGHT ABOUT BY ITS OWN LAXITY, THE LACK OF VALUE PLACED ON LIBERTY, THE SYSTEMATIC AND STERILE CRITICISM DIRECTED AGAINST EVERY INSTITUTION, ALL FORCE METO ASK MYSELF IF WE ARE NOT STRESSING INCOHERENCY AND UNCONSCIOUSNESS. THE USSR HAS ACHIEVED A GREAT VICTORY OVER NATO IN MAKING PUBLIC OPINION BELIEVE THAT DETENTE EXISTS AND THAT NATO MILITARY EXPENDITURES ARE WASTED. THE MORE THE USSR HAS MILITARY SUPERIORITY IN EUROPE AND COUNTERS THAT OF THE US THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE BETTER IT IS PLACED TO IMPOSE ITS WILL AND EVEN ITS IDEOLOGY ON WESTERN EUROPE BY THREATS OR SIMPLE DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE. THE SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF EUROPE IS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT AT A CERTAIN TIME, EUROPE ITSELF WILL HAVE CREATED ITS OWN COMMON DEFENSE, POWERFUL AND BALANCED ENOUGH TO MEET THE SOVIETS AS WELL AS DETERMINED ENOUGH TO MAKE THE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CREDIBLE. WITHOUT THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR UMBRELLA, THE DANGER OF WAR WOULD NO LONGER BE THEORETICAL, BUT WOULD BE A CERTAINTY. IF EUROPE DOES NOT WANT TO DEPEND ON THE AMERICANS, EUROPE WILL BE MORE AND MORE DRIVEN TO ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, TO ORGANIZE ITSELF AND TO PAY THE COSTS. IT IS NECESSARY FOR EUROPEANS TO REFIND THEIR FAITH IN THEMSELVES AND THE WILL TO DEFEND THEIR MOST PREVIOUS INHERITANCE - LIBERTY".

2. FOREGOING COMPILATION OF DIRECT QUOTES OBTAINED FROM BELGIAN PRESS, JANUARY 30, RANGING FROM PRO-GOVERNMENT, CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC LA LIBRE BELGIQUE TO COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN LE DRAPEAU ROUGE. THESE PAPERS CARRY SPEECH EXCERPTS IN VARYING LENGTHS, BUT QUOTES ARE IDENTICAL. ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN IN INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE JANUARY 30, AND WHICH WE ASSUME IS AVAILABLE TO DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES, CARRIES ANOTHER VERSION WITH DIRECT QUOTES, GIVING SPEECH A MORE GAULLIST SLANT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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3. COMMENT: VANDEN BOEYNANTS, AS FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND ONE OF MOST POWERFUL FIGURES IN TENDEMANS GOVERNMENT, MAY HAVE TAKEN A PAGE FROM MARGARET THATCHER'S BOOK. HE IS ONE OF BELGIUM'S MOST ASTUTE POLITICIANS AND IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO NOTE WHETHER THIS THEME, WHICH IS NOVEL HERE, STRIKES A RESPONSIVE CHORD IN BELGIUM.

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SPPECH MAY HAVE BEEN AIMED AT BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
AUDIENCES. IT COULD BE AN OPENING SALVO FOR BELGIAN
COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER WHERE PRINCIPAL ADVERSARY
OF SOCIAL CHRISTIANS WILL BE MITTERAND-ORIENTED SOCIALISTS.
ON INTERNATIONAL SCENE IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE AIMED
PARTICULARLY AT THE FRENCH WHICH HAVE DISAPPOINTED BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT (AND PARTICULARLY ITS FRANCOPHILE DEFENSE
MINISTER) BY IMPEDING EFFORTS OF EUROGROUP AND INDIVIDUAL
ALLIES TO ORGANIZE A "EUROPEAN" APPROACH TO DEFENSE
QUESTIONS, NOTABLY ARMS PROCUREMENT AND STANDARDIZATION.
FIRESTONE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COLLECTIVE SECURITY, DETENTE, SPEECHES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRUSSE01031
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760036-0424
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976016/aaaaaerp.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <17 MAY 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER SPEAKS OUT ON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DETENTE
TAGS: PFOR, BE, UR, (VANDEN BOEYNANTS, PAUL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006